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TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT

1962

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

REPORTS

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

For the Year ending
31st December, 1962.

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TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of the Torrington Rural District for 1962

By

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Medical Officer of Health.

and

F. G. GANE, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.
Chief Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.

STAFF

Medical Officer of Health :—

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Chief Public Health Inspector and Surveyor :—

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Additional Public Health Inspector :—

C. A. KERSWILL, Cert. S.I.E.J.B.

Health Department,
Council Chambers,
Torrington.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended 31st December, 1962.

My thanks go to the Clerk, and to the Surveyor and Chief Public Health Inspector for their assistance and co-operation, and to the Chairmen and members of the Public Health and Housing Committees for their support and encouragement.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

H. Mervyn Thomas.

June 1963.

Torrington Rural District
1962

GENERAL STATISITCS

Area in acres	79,803
Population (Registrar General's mid-year estimate)	7,190
Number of Inhabited Houses	2,428
Rateable Value	£42,365
Sum realised by a Penny Rate	£166

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births—Legitimate—Males 58 Females 36 Illegitimate—Males 1 Females 2	97
Crude Birth Rate	10.7
Corrected Birth Rate	12.6
Birth Rate for England and Wales	18.0
Stillbirths	3
Infant Deaths (under 1 year)	4
Infant Mortality Rate	41.2
Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales	21.4
Maternal Deaths	Nil
Total Deaths	91
Crude Death Rate	12.6
Corrected Death Rate	11.2
Death Rate for England and Wales	11.9

Causes of Death	Male	Female
Cancer of stomach	1	Nil
Cancer of lung	3	Nil
Cancer of breast	Nil	1
Other malignant neoplasms	3	2
Diabetes	Nil	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	5	8
Coronary heart disease	9	8
Hypertension with Heart Disease	1	Nil
Other heart diseases	11	7
Other circulatory diseases	1	2
Influenza	1	Nil
Pneumonia	1	1
Bronchitis	3	2
Nephritis and Nephrosis	2	Nil
Hyperplasia of prostate	2	Nil
Congential malformation	Nil	2
Other defined and ill defined diseases	6	3
Motor vehicle accidents	1	Nil
All other accidents	2	Nil
Suicide	Nil	2
	52	39

Infectious Diseases Notified

Measles	7	Scarletina	1
Erysipelas	1	Acute Primary Pneumonia	2
Tuberculosis (non-pulmonary)	2		

Active Immunisation

Routine immunisation is now offered to children against the following diseases— Diptheria-Whooping Cough-Tetanas (combined) Poliomyelitis Tuberculosis

This service is provided by the Local Health Authority in child welfare clinics and schools and by general Medical Practitioners.

Now that the number of immunising procedures are greater and more varied than ever before their timing and sequence are of special importance so as to obtain the optimum protection from each procedure with the least risk and inconvenience to the child. Accordingly a number of approved schedules of immunisation have been prepared, of which the following is an example—

Age	Visit	Vaccine	Injection	Interval
1 - 6 months	1	Diptheria-Tetanus Petusus	1	4 - 6 weeks
	2	,,	2	4 - 6 weeks
	3	,,	3	
7 - 11 months	4	Poliomyletis (Oral)		4 - 8 weeks
	5	,,		4 - 8 weeks
	6	,,		
18 - 21 months	7	Diptheria-Tetanus plus Smallpox during the first two years preferably in the second year.		
School Entry		Diptheria-Tetanus Poliomyelitus (Oral).		
8 - 12 years		Diptheria-Tetanus.		
Over 12 years		B.C.G. (Tuberculosis).		

Food Hygiene

At least one visit was paid to all food premises in the District during the year. The standard generally was found to be satisfactory both as regards the premises themselves and the individuals employed in the handling of food. There were a few exceptions however. A butcher's shop, a bakery and a grocer's shop were found to fall below the standard required by the Food Hygiene Regulations but informal discussions with the proprietors concerned resulted in the necessary improvements being carried out.

The management of the Winkleigh Slaughterhouse and the state of the premises are generally of satisfactory standard. On only one occasion have I found it necessary to draw attention to a potential source of contamination, and the necessary remedial action was taken immediately. During the year complaints were made concerning stench from the sewage disposal plant serving the slaughterhouse. Appropriate measures were taken to abate this nuisance and the trouble does not appear to have recurred.

Owing to staff shortage it is not possible to undertake fully all the duties relating to food hygiene, but the Authority has under consideration the appointment of an additional public health inspector to overcome this and other difficulties in connection with public health work in the district.

Sub Standard Houses—Improvement Grants

In a circular issued in August the Minister of Housing and Local Government asked all Local Authorities to make a determined and sustained effort in bringing about a very big increase in the number of houses improved under the Improvement Grant schemes. To quote from this circular ". . . the Minister is convinced that for a real impact local authorities must be prepared to make a systematic approach to the problem. This means tackling it street by street or area by area, and it entails, especially at the outset, a great deal of work." It is not considered sufficient merely to rely on general publicity to make landlords and tenants aware of the possibilities of improvement and the grants available. Rather should the local authority take positive action in advising landlords and tenants in specific cases what improvements are possible and persuading those concerned to have them carried out.

Since 1958, 275 houses have been improved in the District, the Authority having approved 134 Standard and 141 Discretionary grants. During 1962, 49 Standard and 5 Discretionary grants were approved. This record can have been surpassed by few, if any rural authorities of similar size. The aim now should be to deal with all the remaining houses in the District capable of being improved, on the lines suggested by the Minister.

Houses beyond Repair at Reasonable Cost

Reference was made during the year to individually unfit and groups of unfit houses which in my opinion should be dealt with under Section 16 of the Housing Act or by clearance area procedure. Action was initiated in respect of some individually unfit houses whilst the need for detailed and systematic housing inspections in all parishes was acknowledged so as to enable the Authority to consider a comprehensive programme of slum clearance.

Annual Report of Surveyor and Chief Public Health Inspector

DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	79
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	17
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	266
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	39
Keeping of Animals	4
Offensive accumulations	5
Inquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	—
Number of Rooms disinfected	—
Visits to Factories	49
Visits to Bakehouses	9
Visits to Schools	4
Food Inspections (other than meat)	3
Visits to Food Preparing Premises (other than meat)	21
Number of Water Samples	3
Building Inspections under Bye-laws	279
Visits to Council Housing Sites	215
Defective Drains	22
Drains examined	106
Plans investigated	141
Petroleum inspections	14
Dirty Houses	3
Sewage Works	307
Improvement Grants	248

HOUSING

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects 74

(2) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 15

(3) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 54

2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action 70

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

Number of Dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local Authority 15

Improvements carried out and nuisances abated :—

External	*No. of Premises*
Walls repaired	28
Roofs repaired	28
Guttering repaired	26
Downspouts repaired	26
Chimneys repaired	28
Water supply laid on into houses	13
New pumps provided	2
Wells cleansed	1
Well steinings repaired	—
New lengths drain laid	62
Defective drains repaired	20
New inspection chambers	61
Septic tanks repaired	2
New septic tanks	26
New gullies	60
New W.C.'s	57
Water Supply laid on to W.C.'s	61
W.C. cisterns renewed	8
New washing accommodation	2
Outbuildings repaired	8

FACTORIES ACT, 1961.

Prescribed Particulars on the Administration of the Factories Act, 1961.

Part I of the Act.

1—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of: Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)	M/c line No. (7)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ..	1	59	39	—	—	1
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	2	—	—	—	—	2
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	3	—	—	—	—	3
TOTAL		59	39	NIL	NIL	

2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	M/c line No.	Number of cases in which defects were found: Found	Remedied	Referred: To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted	M/c line No.

Overcrowding (S.2)	5						5
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)...	6						6
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	7						7
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	8						8
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)							
(*a*) Insufficient	9						9
(*b*) Unsuitable or defective	10	2	2		2		10
(*c*) Not separate for sexes	11						11
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework)	12						12
TOTAL		4	4	NIL	2	NIL	

Part VIII of the Act.
OUTWORK (Sections 133 and 134).

Nature of Work	M/c line No.	Section 133			Section 134			M/c line No.
		No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Wearing apparel, Making, etc.	13	40	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	13

Internal	*No. of Premises*
Walls replastered	29
Ceilings replastered	29
Windows repaired	34
Doors repaired	28
Floors repaired	27
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	26
New sinks	28
New sculleries	—
Baths installed	59
Food storage improved	44
Stairs repaired	22
Hot water systems fixed	58

New Housing Accommodation

Number of new houses erected by local authority	2
Number of new houses erected by private enterprise	13

Council Housing Programme

During the year only eight one bedroomed bungalows were completed and tenders were approved for the erection of 12 two bedroomed bungalows. The Council now owns 172 houses and bungalows.

5 Discretionary Improvement grants were approved during the year bringing the total up to 153. In addition 49 standard grants were approved bringing the total up to 198. The number of improvements actually completed to date is 134 standard grants and 141 discretionary. The total expenditure to the end of the year was :—

Discretionary grants	£45,833
Standard grants	£16,930
	£62,763

The total number of properties in the district over 12 years old is 2,100 so the figure of 275 houses modernised represents 13 per cent. of the total, a figure, I feel, of which the Council can be justifiably proud. Much work remains to be done in the field of housing such as slum clearance but little progress can be made in this direction with the present limited staff.

Common Lodging Houses

There are no registered Common Lodging Houses in the district.

Caravans

Residential caravans do not present much of a problem. There are only 3 licensed sites for single caravans. In addition there are a few individually sited vans within the curtilage of dwellings used by the occupiers which are permitted under the Act. There are also 5 exempt sites used by the Caravan Club and the Camping Club but these appear to be little used.

REFUSE COLLECTION

The Council operates a fortnightly refuse collection covering most of the area except for a few isolated farms and cottages. The vehicle used is a diesel-operated Karrier Gamecock manned by two collector-drivers. The refuse is disposed of on three tips at Winkleigh, Merton and Roborough. The vehicle also collects the refuse from litter bins in the villages and on roadside lay-byes.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The villages of Winkleigh, Shebbear, Sheepwash, Taddiport, St. Giles-in-the-Wood, Kingscott, Roborough, Petrockstowe, Merton and Yarnscombe are now equipped with modern sewerage and sewage disposal systems. The only works to be completed during 1962 was Yarnscombe. Although outline schemes for Little Torrington and Stibb Cross were submitted to the Ministry there was considerable delay in getting approval and this has put back the progress of all the other schemes. Detailed plans are now being prepared for these two parishes. Outlines have also been prepared for Ashreigney, Hollocombe and Weare Giffard. Other villages requiring schemes to complete the Council's programme are Dolton, High Bickington, Langtree, Beaford and Riddlecombe. These villages have sewage systems at the moment but they are obsolete. It is very unfortnnate that more rapid progress cannot be made in carrying out this very necessary work.

WATER SUPPLIES

The area is now very well served by the North Devon Water Board via a network of mains and all villages and hamlets are supplied. Only remote dwellings now rely on shallow wells for a supply.

The following new connections were made during the year :

34 Domestic 1 Trade

The total number of premises now connected to the mains is :

1,539 Domestic 156 Trade

(*excluding farm houses*)

There are no standpipes in the district.

The following is a list of the parishes showing the number of houses connected and an estimate of the population served :—

	No. of houses	*No. of population served*
Alverdiscott	42	126
Ashreigney	81	243
Beaford	80	240
Buckland Filleigh	16	48
Dolton	121	363
Dowland	17	51
Frithelstock	64	192
High Bickington	83	249
Huish	14	42
Huntshaw	11	33
Langtree	91	273
Little Torrington	64	192
Merton	90	270
Peters Marland	55	165
Petrockstowe	68	204
Roborough	30	90
St. Giles	99	297
Shebbear	108	324
Sheepwash	68	204
Weare Giffard	60	180
Winkleigh	240	720
Yarnscombe	38	114

The water is treated at the source to counteract plumbo-solvency. Samples of the water are frequently taken by the Board's officials for chemical and bacteriological examination and the results are notified to the Department.

RODENT DESTRUCTION

In conjunction with Torrington Borough Council a full-time Operator is shared by the two authorities.

The following work was carried out in the Rural District during the year :—

Number of Survey calls made :—

Private Houses	1,661
Refuse Tips and Sewage Works	45
Farms	199
Business Premises	51

Number of Premises treated :—

Private Houses	221
Refuse Tips and Sewage Works	9
Farms	65
Business Premises	5

OFFENSIVE TRADES

There are no offensive trades in the district.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Slaughtering

There are two licensed slaughter houses in the district including an abattoir at Winkleigh. 100 per cent. meat inspection is at present carried out but only with some personal inconvenience to the inspectorate owing to irregular hours of slaughtering and week-end killing.

Staffing is a problem as there is no reserve in case of illness or holiday relief. My own time is too fully occupied on vital work to permit much assistance in this direction and consequently I am very concerned for the maintenance of present standards.

TABLE A

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part

Figures in brackets are for 1961

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs and Goats	Pigs	Horses
Number killed (if known)	1646 (1480)	617 (415)	3816 (4582)	54005 (59858)	16550 (7731)	— (—)
Number inspected	1646 (1480)	617 (415)	3816 (4582)	54005 (59858)	16550 (7731)	— (—)
All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci						
Whole carcases condemned....	6 (3)	11 (13)	27 (51)	148 (243)	30 (305)	— (—)
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	40 (96)	114 (150)	6 (3)	1268 (1595)	538 (203)	— (—)
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci	2.8 (7.4)	18.6 (39.2)	.8 (1.2)	2.6 (3.1)	3.5 (6.5)	— (—)
Tuberculosis only						
Whole carcases condemned	— (—)	(—)	— (—)	— (—)	2 (2)	— (—)
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	— (1)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	95 (168)	— (—)
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	— (.06)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	.6 (2.2)	— (—)
Cystircercosis						
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	2 (4)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	2 (4)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE B

Summary of Meat Condemnations with cause and weight.

Food Condemned	Weight in lbs.
Due to Tuberculosis :	
Portions of 95 Pigs	1054lbs. *i.e.* 9cwts. 1qr. 18lbs.
Due to Diseases other than Tuberculosis :	
Carcases and Organs of 6 Oxen	2907
Carcases and Organs of 11 Cows	4667
Carcases and Organs of 27 Calves	1053
Carcases and Organs of 30 Pigs	1750
Carcases and Organs of 148 Sheep	6381
Parts of 40 Oxen	720
Parts of 538 Pigs	2600
Parts of 1268 Sheep	2820
Parts of 6 Calves	46
Parts of 114 Cows....	2043
	24,987lbs.
	i.e. 11 tons 3cwts. 0qrs. 11lbs.

Condemned meat was disposed of through trade channels after staining with napthalene green.

TABLE C

Other Foodstuffs .... 84lb. Margarine—rancid

FOOD PREMISES

The following is a list of food premises in the district :—

Grocery and General Stores	32
Bakers	3
Butchers	5
Fishmongers	1
Public Houses	15
Other Hotels and Cafes	3
	59

Seventeen Premises are registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, for the sale of pre-packed ice-cream and two for the manufacture and sale of fish and chips. No ice-cream is manufactured in the district. 21 visits to food premises were made during the year.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACT

There are two registered swill boiling plants in the district.

PETROLEUM LICENCES

34 petroleum storage licences were issued during the year.

SLAUGHTERING LICENCES

7 licences were issued during the year to slaughtermen.

PLANS

139 plans were submitted during the year, 124 were approved, 12 disapproved, and 3 cancelled.

All plans were considered by the Council's Planning Committee before submission to the Divisional Planning Committee of the Devon County Council.

I attended most of the monthly meetings of the Divisional Planning Committee.

STAFF

Again I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Kerswill for the conscientious way in which he has carried out meat inspection, often under trying conditions. I would also like to thank your Clerk, Mr. B. W. Leatt, for his close co-operation and assistance at all times.